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RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 0507
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 7494
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 5656
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 4094
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 4138
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 3231
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 8090
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 5689
RUEHON/AMCONSUL TORONTO PRIORITY 0438
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 001509

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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/02/2017

TAGS: [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: TIGER POLITICAL WING HEAD KILLED IN AIR
FORCE RAID

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires James R. Moore, for reasons 1.4(b, d).

¶1. (U) LTTE Headquarters announced in a press release on November 2 that LTTE political chief and lead peace negotiator S.P. Thamichelvan was killed at about 6 a.m. in a Sri Lankan Air Force attack near the LTTE de facto capital of Kilinochchi. Five other LTTE officers, including Lt Col. Anpunami (Alex), Major Mihuthan, Major Nethagy, Lt Adchgivel, and Lt Vahaikumaran were also killed. The pro-LTTE website Tamilnet reported that the Air Force had targeted "the residence of the members of the Political Division."

¶2. (C) However, UNDP resident representative Neil Buhne (protect) told Pol Chief that the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission, who were in constant contact with the LTTE PPeace Secretariat in Kilinochchi, and the head of the UN agencies

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in Kilinochchi, confirmed that the strike was on a training camp several kilometers east of Kilinochchi - not on Thamichelvan's residence. The UN official was in the process of examining the damage.

¶3. (C) Armed forces spokesman Brigadier Nanayakkara told Pol FSN that the Sri Lankan military had specific intelligence that two important meetings were taking place in the Tiger-held Vanni today. One was a Black Tiger (suicide cadre) meeting in Iranamadu, where the main LTTE air strip is located. The other was a "leadership meeting" at the training camp east of Kilinochchi. The Sri Lankan military did not know exactly who would be at the meeting, but they had hoped to target the Sea Tiger chief Soosai, he said.

¶4. (C) A Norwegian Embassy PolOff who has frequently attended meetings with Thamichelvan noted that after the cancer death of Anton Balasingham earlier this year and the demise of Thamichelvan today the LTTE had lost "a huge chunk of its institutional memory and negotiating capacity." He said Norway had yet to assess the impact on the peace process and its facilitating role, but obviously the absence of Thamichelvan would not be helpful.

15. (U) Following is the full text of LTTE Headquarters press release:

"With deep sorrow we announce to the people of Tamil Eelam, the Tamil people living all over the world and the international community that at 6.00 am today, Friday 2 November 2007, Head of our organization's Political Division, Brig S P Thamilselvan was killed by the Sri Lankan Air Force aerial bombing. With him Lt Col. Anpunami (Alex), Major Mihuthan, Major Nethagay, Lt Adchigivel, and Lt Vahaikumaran were also killed.

Seeran
Secretary

SIPDIS
LTTE Head Quarters"

16. (C) COMMENT: Based on information currently available to us, we have no reason to conclude that the Sri Lankan military deliberately targeted Thamilselvan. Military sources indicate that the Air Force had been intensively engaged in searching for high-value LTTE targets in response to the October 21 LTTE attack on the Anuradhapura Air Base. The GSL will likely play up today's action in the hopes of reducing the public's focus on the successful LTTE strike on the Anuradhapura base. However, Thamilselvan was just beginning to fill the role previously occupied by LTTE political strategist Balasingham. The loss of Thamilselvan deals the prospects for an early revival of peace talks soon another setback. We are concerned there may be a heightened risk that the LTTE - which has recently confined itself to military targets - may attempt a tit-for-tat assassination of an important GSL figure, which would further reduce the scope for peace efforts.
MOORE